

5486

To the Chairmen and members of the Judiciary Committee;

My name is Richard F. Wareing and I have lived in Downtown Hartford since March of 1994. I write in support of HB 5486, ***AN ACT CONCERNING RESIDENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR REGISTERED SEXUAL OFFENDERS.***

Passage of this bill would provide an important measure of protection to the schoolchildren of Connecticut, especially those in urban areas, where schools very often are in the middle of dense residential neighborhoods and where children still often walk to and from school, and particularly those in communities like Hartford and New Haven, where a disproportionate number of registered sex offenders are sent upon their release from prison.

At present, a registered sex offender, however dangerous, may take up residence literally across the street from a school and, indeed, in Hartford this is the case with respect to the elementary school in my own neighborhood. As of Sunday, March 21, 2010 the Sex Offender Registry shows a registered – but noncompliant -- sex offender living across the street from the Ramon E. Betances School on Charter Oak Avenue. The Sex Offender Registry also indicates that another 12 registered sex offenders live within 2000 feet of school grounds.

Unfortunately, the Betances School is not alone. For example, as of March 21, 2010, the Sex Offender Registry identifies three registered sex offenders living within 2000 feet of the Rawson School in the Blue Hills section of Hartford's North End; three living within 2000 feet of the Naylor School in Hartford's South End; seven living within 2000 feet of the Sand School in the Clay Hill neighborhood in Hartford; nine living within 2000 feet of the Noah Webster School in Hartford's West End; and ten living within 2000 feet of the Parkville Community School.

HB 5486 cannot guarantee that our children will be safe from sexual predators. No law can do that. It will, however, prohibit registered sex offenders from taking up residence nearby and thus provide a greater measure of safety to children who walk to and from school every day and who use a school's playgrounds and ball fields, often unsupervised. It will also give law enforcement another tool to deal with dangerous predators who stalk our children.

I therefore urge this committee to recommend this bill for adoption.

Thank you,

Richard F. Wareing
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